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## THE HOMERIC CAESURA AND HOMERIC STYLE

Professor Scott in his recent discussion (*Class. Phil.*, X, 438-42) of Professor Seymour's paper on "The Homeric Caesura and the Close of the Verse as Related to the Expression of Thought" (*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, III [1892], 91-129) rightly points out that there are very many cases in which the caesura has no influence upon the construction or meaning. This discussion, however, seems likely to create a wrong impression of Professor Seymour's views, and to that extent has done an injustice to his conclusions.

In the first place, one is likely to form an impression from reading Professor Scott's article that the statement: "The true construction is often indicated by the pause in the third foot," is Professor Seymour's main thesis, whereas it is incidental and receives only a brief treatment (less than three pages in a paper of nearly forty). Professor Seymour expressly states in his conclusion (p. 126): "This paper does not claim . . . that the caesura in every verse is significant." Consequently the thousands of verses in which Professor Scott finds no significance of this kind do not at all affect the position taken by Professor Seymour. If this is to be weakened, the verses cited by Professor Seymour (pp. 123-26) must be shown to be not in point, and Professor Scott does not refer to a single one of these. The verse which he gives at the head of his list and to which he returns at the end ( $\alpha$  58) is not found in Professor Seymour's paper.

Again, it is to the *beginner* that, according to Professor Seymour, "the true construction is often indicated by the pause in the third foot." Compare: "The beginner is frequently saved the comparison of different passages by noting the rhythm of the verse" (p. 126); "Θ, 133. βροντήσας δ' ἄρα δεινὸν ἀφήκ' ἀργῆτα κεραυνόν. The Homeric scholar feels at once that δεινόν is cognate accusative with βροντήσας, and the mere order of words is sufficient to separate it from ἀργῆτα κεραυνόν, but the beginner, who expects essentially the same arrangement of words in Homer as in Vergil, is helped by noticing the intimation offered by the verse-pause" (p. 124). Professor Seymour was deeply interested in the elementary student and his teachers, and it is to these that the remark about the caesura as a clue to the construction is directed. This should be taken into consideration in understanding his position.

Finally, it must be remembered that Professor Seymour's main contention is that the caesura of the third foot (and the pause at the end of the verse) "help to explain much which seems at first sight tautological and is explained as such." They "do much to make a picturesque scene and to mark emotion." "Translators and commentators in general have paid too little attention to the matter [the importance of the caesura and the pause at the end of the verse], and have thus lost many delicate Homeric touches of emphasis and contrast" (p. 126). It is more the art and style of the poet than his meaning and construction which Professor Seymour thinks is

revealed by careful attention to the caesura of the third foot. Compare: "Even a superficial examination [of later epic poetry] shows at once the impossibility of applying to these later poets the principles which have been urged in this paper as fixing *important elements of Homeric style*" (p. 129; the italics are mine). This is the principle which Professor Seymour sets forth "with emphasis and in great detail" (to quote from Professor Scott's article); the pages which are devoted to the caesura as an indication of the construction are strictly subordinate. This latter doctrine must stand or fall with the principle that the pauses of the verse had an important influence on the style of the Homeric poet. Stylometric tests, rather than verses in which the pauses seem to have little or no significance, will determine the validity of Professor Seymour's theory. Professor Prescott (*Class. Phil.*, VII, 35 ff.) has led the way in interpreting and, in some respects, correcting the theory of Professor Seymour. Much more remains to be done. The "deferred" nouns and adjectives need to be studied with reference to the important pauses within the verse. The writer has attempted to describe (*Trans. Am. Phil. Ass.*, XXXVI [1905], 111-24) the bucolic diaeresis with reference to the connection of thought; the hepthemimeral pause has yet to be examined with this in view. There is a wide field for research in Homeric word-order.<sup>1</sup> It may prove that the ordinary laws of emphasis in the sentence and the exigencies of the meter frequently brought the emphatic word just before or after some particular pause. In the meantime perhaps we may after all agree with Professor Scott (p. 441) that "the help furnished by the caesura in matters of contrast or emphasis is largely subjective and a matter of personal interpretation." But acting on this principle, one who, like the writer, has been privileged to know the personal interpretation of Homer by Professor Seymour may say with a distinguished Platonic scholar (John Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*, Part I, 349 f.): "Personally I have found this hypothesis [Professor Burnet is of course referring to his own theory of Platonic philosophy] efficacious during a course of . . . study extending over twenty years at least. . . . The reader . . . must make the experiment for himself. He will certainly find it worth while."

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### PHILOSOPHASTER IN ERASMUS

The genuineness of *philosophaster* in the phrase *Vir gravis et philosophaster Tullius*, used by Augustine in characterizing Cicero (*De civ. dei* ii. 27), is easily proved both by paleographical and literary evidence.<sup>2</sup> An interesting confirmatory late instance, hitherto unnoticed, on the literary side occurs in

<sup>1</sup> See La Roche, *Wiener Studien*, XVIII (1896); XIX (1897); *Zeitschrift für die öster. Gym.*, XLVI (1895).

<sup>2</sup> See *Classical Philology*, V, 50 ff.